

CLAIMS

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1. A rights-managed email for sending protected content from a sender to a recipient, whereby the recipient can render the protected content with a corresponding license if the recipient satisfies terms set forth in the license, the email comprising:

10 a main information portion having a message that the email is rights management protected; and

an attachment portion having the protected content,
wherein the recipient if enabled can render the protected
content in the attachment portion and if not enabled can only review the main
15 information portion having the message.

2. The email of claim 1 wherein the attachment portion further has rights data relating to the protected content, the rights data setting forth each entity that has rights with respect to the protected content, and for each such
20 entity a description of such rights.

3. The email of claim 2 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion is encrypted according to a cryptographic key, and the rights data includes a decryption key (KD) for decrypting the encrypted content.
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4. The email of claim 3 wherein the decryption key (KD) is encrypted according to a public key of a rights management (RM) server (PU-RM) operated by or on behalf of an organization of the sender to result in (PU-RM(KD)), where only the RM server can access (KD) from (PU-RM(KD)) with a
30 corresponding private key (PR-RM).

5. The email of claim 1 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion comprises multiple alternative forms of a body of the email, whereby the recipient can select from among the alternative forms when rendering the protected content.

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6. The email of claim 1 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion comprises a body and an attachment list, the attachment list including preface information, at least one attachment to the body, and any metadata relating to each attachment of the body.

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7. The email of claim 1 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion is compressed to reduce an overall size thereof.

8. A method for an enabled recipient to handle a received rights-managed email with protected content from a sender, the email comprising a main information portion having a message that the email is rights management protected and an attachment portion having the protected content, the method comprising:

receiving the email;
recognizing that the email has the protected content in the attachment portion thereof;
discounting the main information portion of the email; and
examining the attachment portion of the email and proceeding based thereon to render the protected content in the attachment portion.

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9. The method of claim 8 wherein the protected content is encrypted and is decryptable according to a decryption key (KD), wherein the attachment portion further has rights data relating to the protected content, the rights data including (KD) and setting forth each entity that has rights with respect to the protected content and for each such entity a description of such rights, and wherein rendering the protected content in the attachment portion comprises:

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retrieving the rights data in the attachment portion of the email;

forwarding the retrieved rights data to a rights management (RM) server, such RM server for determining that the recipient is an entity listed in the rights data and issuing to the recipient a license corresponding to the protected content to the recipient based on the rights data, such license specifying rights the recipient has with respect to the protected content as determined from the rights data and also including (KD) from the rights data encrypted in a manner decryptable by the recipient;

reviewing the issued license to determine that the recipient has a right to render the protected content of the attachment portion of the email; retrieving (KD) from the license; decrypting the protected content with (KD); and rendering the decrypted content.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion comprises multiple alternative forms of a body of the email, the method further comprising selecting from among the alternative forms when rendering the protected content.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion is compressed to reduce an overall size thereof, the method further comprising decompressing the protected content.

12. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a data structure comprising a rights-managed email for sending protected content from a sender to a recipient, whereby the recipient can render the protected content with a corresponding license if the recipient satisfies terms set forth in the license, the email comprising:

a main information portion having a message that the email is rights management protected; and an attachment portion having the protected content,

wherein the recipient if enabled can render the protected content in the attachment portion and if not enabled can only review the main information portion having the message.

5 13. The medium of claim 12 wherein the attachment portion further has rights data relating to the protected content, the rights data setting forth each entity that has rights with respect to the protected content, and for each such entity a description of such rights.

10 14. The medium of claim 13 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion is encrypted according to a cryptographic key, and the rights data includes a decryption key (KD) for decrypting the encrypted content.

15 15. The medium of claim 14 wherein the decryption key (KD) is encrypted according to a public key of a rights management (RM) server (PU-RM) operated by or on behalf of an organization of the sender to result in (PU-RM(KD)), where only the RM server can access (KD) from (PU-RM(KD)) with a corresponding private key (PR-RM).

20 16. The medium of claim 12 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion comprises multiple alternative forms of a body of the email, whereby the recipient can select from among the alternative forms when rendering the protected content.

25 17. The medium of claim 12 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion comprises a body and an attachment list, the attachment list including preface information, at least one attachment to the body, and any metadata relating to each attachment of the body.

30 18. The medium of claim 12 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion is compressed to reduce an overall size thereof.

19. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for performing a method for an enabled recipient to handle a received rights-managed email with protected content from a sender, the email comprising a main information portion having a message that the email is rights management protected and an attachment portion having the protected content, the method comprising:

receiving the email;
recognizing that the email has the protected content in the attachment portion thereof;
discounting the main information portion of the email; and
examining the attachment portion of the email and proceeding based thereon to render the protected content in the attachment portion.

20. The medium of claim 19 wherein the protected content is encrypted and is decryptable according to a decryption key (KD), wherein the attachment portion further has rights data relating to the protected content, the rights data including (KD) and setting forth each entity that has rights with respect to the protected content and for each such entity a description of such rights, and wherein rendering the protected content in the attachment portion comprises:

retrieving the rights data in the attachment portion of the email;

forwarding the retrieved rights data to a rights management (RM) server, such RM server for determining that the recipient is an entity listed in the rights data and issuing to the recipient a license corresponding to the protected content to the recipient based on the rights data, such license specifying rights the recipient has with respect to the protected content as determined from the rights data and also including (KD) from the rights data encrypted in a manner decryptable by the recipient;

reviewing the issued license to determine that the recipient has a right to render the protected content of the attachment portion of the email;
retrieving (KD) from the license;
decrypting the protected content with (KD); and

rendering the decrypted content.

21. The medium of claim 19 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion comprises multiple alternative forms of a body of the email, the
5 method further comprising selecting from among the alternative forms when rendering the protected content.

22. The medium of claim 19 wherein the protected content in the attachment portion is compressed to reduce an overall size thereof, the method
10 further comprising decompressing the protected content.